2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

club and a sports club. In Farrug, for instance, there are two band clubs – one of which is dedicated to St. Martin, the other to St. Roque – a football club and an active Labour Party committee; while Kortin has a band club, a social club, a Labour club, a football club and a troop of Boy Scouts. The term secular, used in this context, requires a few words of qualification. Although clubs and associations which I have called secular do not form part of the Church, this does not necessarily mean that they are opposed to it, or are cut off from it. Quite the contrary. Almost every club has a chaplain who serves as a link between it and the parish priest. Most clubs take part in certain religious functions, especially during the week preceding Easter. Moreover, many of the clubs have dedicated themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by means of special religious ceremonies. Often this dedication is renewed annually. Only the clubs of the Malta Labour Party do not have any linkage with the Church.

The band clubs are the most important secular societies. They are formally constituted associations with elected committees, premises of their own and a large body of dues-paying members drawn from all occupational and social classes. The first band clubs were established shortly after the middle of the last century in order to organize the external celebrations and provide music for the annual festas of village patron saints. The clubs multiplied rapidly, and soon became civic and social centres. They have broadened their scope to include dramatic groups, reading rooms and places where members can gamble out of sight of the watchful eyes of the law. Most clubs have large concert halls that can be used for wedding receptions. Today, each club usually has a well-stocked bar, a television set and a billiards table.

But a band club is more than just a social centre. As it usually plays an important part in organizing the external celebration of the annual festa, the men who run the club make decisions which affect all the inhabitants. Furthermore, the club often represents the community to the outside world. Not only is the club's brass band considered as the village's band when it plays at other festas, but the club also provides a welcome to important visitors from outside. Thus when the Governor or the Archbishop makes an official visit, he normally calls on the band clubs, where he is given a reception on behalf of the entire village.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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CANDLEMAS DAY

This is a religious festival observed not only in Malta but in all other Catholic countries in honour of the Blessed Virgin on the 2nd of February, the 40th day after the Nativity of our Lord.

The word Candlemas is evidently derived from the benediction of the candles, followed by a procession, which takes place in the churches on the morning of this day.

Nearly every family in the Island is presented with one or two of these blessed candles—each having at the lower end, the image of the Blessed Virgin stamped in gold leaf, as a distinction from other ordinary wax candles.

These they receive either from the priests, or from some other person attached to the church, as a sort of a slight recompense, for the contributions

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

offered during the year, for the purpose either of decorating or repairing the church or churches of the parish to which they belong.

It is also customary for every parish priest—on this special day, or on the day following—to present both the Bishop and the Governor of the Island with a two lb. candle. It is to be observed, however, that the candle given to the Governor is only a blessed one when he happens to profess the Roman Catholic Religion.

This giving of candles to both the Bishop and the Governor—a continuation of a custom that prevailed in the time of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, when the Grand Master was annually presented with a blessed candle on this day—is meant as a token of respect to each of the highest Ecclesiastical and Civil dignitaries of the Island.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

liberation of the Maltese from the yoke of the Saracens by Count Roger of Normandy in the year 1090. 527 186 [175] [648]

A liberal programme is now annually arranged by the Committee embracing every kind of attraction at Notabile.

PILGRIMAGES TO MELLEHA (*) 778* 788

On the last two Sundays of September, every year, the roads leading to Melleha are alive with merry parties, especially country people, on their way to that village, in order to visit the

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(*) Melleha is a village some 10½ miles distant from Valletta, and about an hour's ride from St. Paul's Bay. It is renowned for the very old, perhaps the oldest, Sanctuary in the world, dedicated to the B. Virgin. This Sanctuary was founded by St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, while he was in Malta (58 A. D.) for the convenience of the faithful who lived in those neighbourhoods. Over the small altar is a picture of St. Mary, covering another old drawing of the same, executed by St. Luke. [361] [776] [532]

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

778 788 Sanctuary dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.

[782] [527] When the devout visitors recite their prayers in the venerated shrine of the Madonna, and leave behind their offerings, such as candles, oil to be burnt in the lamps before the image, waxen and silver limbs &c., they come out and devote the remainder of the day to amusements.

173 778 788 The annual pilgrimages to Melleha in September are supposed to have originated after the victory won by the Maltese over the Turks in 1565. The siege being raised on the 7th of Sept. —the eve of the day dedicated to the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin— the Maltese, in token of gratitude for the help received from the Virgin, in those trying days, made pilgrimages to Melleha, to offer prayers before the mirac-

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

ulous effigy of the B. V. Mary, venerated in that shrine excavated out of the rock. 173 778 788

ALL SOULS' DAY
2nd November

In Malta, the same as in any other Roman Catholic country, a feast is also celebrated for the dead, and the Cemeteries especially that of the "Addolorata," which ranks amongst the finest in Europe, are, on the 1st and 2nd of November the favourite resort of nearly the whole population of the towns and of the neighbouring villages. 769 796

Amidst mournful tingling and tolling of the church bells, countless inhabitants, mostly clad in the habiliments of grief, and murmuring prayers, are seen wending their way to the Cemetery. Arrived

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

directed upwards, and having a mouth piece by which the skin is filled, and a cane flute or pipe which is played with both hands. This the country people play at this time of the year to represent the shepherds of Bethlehem. 796 534 [237]

The decking out of the *presepiu*, a crib or representation of the Nativity of the Holy Child at Bethlehem, by a group of dolls with pasteboard scenery, furnishes amusement to the Maltese, both old and young. 796 798

Several of the houses have a crib more or less artistically arranged, and the better the arrangements of the crib, the greater is the concourse of people who come to see it.

The custom of decking our churches and habitations with evergreens at Christmas has existed from the very establishment of Christianity and was 796 174 824

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

is no sacrifice they will not gladly make for the greater dignity and beauty of their churches. Take, for example, the case of Mġarr—one of the smallest and poorest of the parishes of Malta and the one most cherished by that great seaman and lover of Malta, the late Admiral Sir W. W. Fisher. Here between the two wars the inhabitants, nearly all hard-working peasants, under the enthusiastic leadership of their parish priest, Father (later Monsignor) Edgar Salomone, built a great new church by their own efforts, bringing their weekly contributions to the building fund in eggs and fowls and vegetables and whatever else they produce.

At street corners statues of saints, sometimes also of souls enveloped in a purgatorial blaze, afford them ever-present reminders, encouraging or minatory as the case may be, of the next world; in this one they love the great ecclesiastical ceremonies, particularly the processions which are one of the features of Maltese life. These assume on Good Friday something of the character of a Passion Play, with members of lay confraternities staggering along Merchants' Street in Valetta beneath the weight of life-size groups of the Passion carved with gruesome realism. I have also seen these processions in Palermo, where I have been shocked at the flippancy and irreverence not so much of the onlookers as of the actual participants. The Maltese play their parts in these functions with profound and solemn devoutness. Indeed, some of them may be bearing their burden, whatever it is, in fulfilment of a self-imposed penance, concealing their features behind a hood with eye-holes that covers the head.

But on the annual *festa*, the local saint's day, of their village they give themselves up wholeheartedly to rejoicings, which are definitely on the noisy side. For they are punctuated by the explosions of crackers, maroons and every procurable form of noise-producing apparatus, and they are illuminated by ingenious, locally made fireworks. On these days the casals are a brave sight as they fly from the top of every house of any importance the flag of

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

In his wanderings, especially in the country districts, the visitor will likewise notice, let into the external walls of churches, small marble slabs bearing the inscription:

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692
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NON GODE
L'IMMUNITÀ
ECCLESIASTICA

The tablets meant that the churches and chapels in question did not enjoy the right of ecclesiastical sanctuary, and their explanation lay in the fact that until well after the beginning of the nineteenth century the Ecclesiastical Courts in Malta exercised temporal jurisdiction over the clergy. It followed that their jurisdiction extended over all consecrated buildings, in which the civil authority was unable to exercise its functions.

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The next stage was reached when lay criminals sought refuge in these "extra-territorial" churches from the arm of the civil law. When the abuse tended to become serious the ecclesiastical authorities sought to minimize it by affixing the notice in question to various rural churches with the object of confining the right of sanctuary to the churches on which the inscription did not appear. But the right, even thus restricted, had clearly become an anachronism dangerous to the peace and good order of the country, and no longer tolerable. So in 1828 it was completely abolished by Governor Ponsonby by means of a Proclamation, whose preamble declares that:

> In consequence of certain privileges or immunities heretofore claimed as belonging to divers churches and other holy edifices and places in these islands, wicked and profligate men have often been tempted to commit murders, robberies and other atrocious crimes in the hope of escaping punishment by taking refuge in such places.